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It is a great honour for me, to introduce Prof. Dr. Heiner Lück , recipient of the Georges Sarton-medal. Heiner Lück was born in 1954 in Nauendorf near Halle an der Saale in what was then the German Democratic Republic. He studied at the gymnasium in Brandenburg and later at the Martin-Luther-University Halle-Wittenberg. In 1983 he obtained his Dr. iur. with a study on the judicial praxis of the Wittenberg law school during the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. Immediately thereafter, he became an assistant at his alma mater, where he obtained his habilitation, in 1988, with a magisterial study concerning the legal system in the Electorate of Saxony during the early modern era.

The unexpected political events of 1989 forced Heiner Lück to complete an extra study of (West-)German civil law at Giessen University in 1993. Even though the 1990's, years of transition within Germany, were not easy for academics with a GDR background., Heiner Lück fared well and was invited to teach at the universities of Greifswald, Zürich and Passau.

Ever since the start of his academic career as an assistant, our colleague showed a remarkable interest in the regional and local legal history of his native Saxony and Saxony-Anhalt. Therefore, it was not a total surprise, when he became professor for civil law and for European and German legal history at Halle-Wittenberg University in 1994. Unlike most of his German colleagues, he remained, as if he were a loyal vassal of medieval times, faithful to this university which gave him so many opportunities and which is in fact the most important university (over 20.000 students) of the German state ("Bundesland") of Saxony-Anhalt. Heiner Lück is also a member of the Saxonian Academy for Sciences in Leipzig.

As was already mentioned, Heiner Lück teaches German civil law, so he has published some articles on this topic. However the regional legal history in all its aspects (legislation, case law, customary law, doctrine) was, is and probably always will be the main topic of his research and the favorite of his teaching. In all, the total number of articles which he published amounts to over 200, he published nine books and was the editor of another 31 books on the laws of Magdeburg, the laws of the Electorate of Saxony, the history of the universities of Halle and Wittenberg and, most of all, the Saxon Mirror. The Saxon Mirror or survey of Saxonian law, was written around 1220 by Eike von Repgow. It's Germany's most important law book and legal code during the middle ages. It's author originated from the present-day Reppichau, now a small village in Saxony-Anhalt.

In his work, Lück not only tries to serve the academic world, but also has an eye for the common people of his native soil. He has published a lot of articles in journals of regional history in Saxony and Saxony-Anhalt and by doing so, he has popularized legal and institutional history to a great extent. Let it be remarked that he even published on the new flag and on the history of the coat of arms of present-day Saxony-Anhalt and that, thanks to him the citizens of Reppichau even have decorated the outer walls of their houses with paintings copying the miniatures in the medieval manuscripts of the Saxon mirror, thus turning Reppichau into a monument of the Saxon mirror.

It is obvious that Heiner Lück is convinced that regional legal history serves both European and local legal history. As it is impossible to mention all of his publications in detail, one can refer, by way of example, to works such as "Über den Sachsenspiegel" (2005, later various reprints), "Wittenberg, ein Zentrum europäischer Rechtsgeschichte" (2006) or his numerous articles in the prestigious "Handwörterbuch zur deutschen Rechtsgeschichte". However his legal history researches are not strictly limited to the Ancien Régime as can be seen in his study on the commemoration of 150 years law school of the Halle-Wittenberg University (2005). He even did not avoid the more difficult parts

of recent German history, as can be seen in a separate study of the same law school during the Nazi regime (2011).

In the article following hereafter Heiner Lück will answer the question whether the settlers out of the county of Flanders also imported some of their customary law into the Fläming, a region on the border of Saxony-Anhalt and Brandenburg where a lot of Flemings settled during the middle ages. In earlier studies he already proved the enormous important influence of Saxonian and Magdeburg laws in Eastern Europe. A lot of these conclusions were published in Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic. The mixed regional/European concept of his research brought Heiner Lück to the European capital in 2007. At the Representation of the State of Saxony-Anhalt to the E.U. in Brussels, he organized the exhibition "Saxon Mirror and Magdeburg law as a basis for Europe". In parallel with this exhibition and together with three Flemish legal historians (including our Ghent colleague Dirk Heirbaut), an international colloquium on medieval legal history took place. The proceedings were published in the famous *Iuris Scripta Historica* series of the Royal Flemish Academy of Belgium for Science and the Arts.

As one can notice, Heiner Lück has a lot of similarities with the famous legal historians of our own university such as François Ganshof and Raoul Van Caenegem. These erudites studied the medieval criminal and feudal law of the former county of Flanders. They were convinced that comparative legal history is only possible when there are enough regional studies at hand. What our Ghent colleagues achieved for Flanders, Heiner Lück did brilliantly for Saxony and Saxony-Anhalt.

In 2014 it will be a quarter of a century since the iron curtain was opened and Germany was able to achieve its peaceful reunification. This gave academics all over Central- and Eastern-Europe new possibilities. Heiner Lück is a living testimony of this rebirth of a unified European legal history or *ius commune*. I'm sure that George Sarton would be delighted to see that nowadays all over Europe academics can jointly explore the history of various fields of science. Let us hope that Heiner Lück will continue his regional research on Saxony-Anhalt, thus contributing to the broader knowledge of European legal history.

Rik Opsommer